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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW

Twenty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 601st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 10 June 1996, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. PIAGGI de VANOSSI (Argentina)

CONTENTS

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: DRAFT MODEL LAW; POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: DRAFT MODEL LAW; POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK (continued) (A/50/17; A/CN.9/421; A/CN.9/XXIX/CRP.3)

Article "x" (continued)

1. Mr. CHANDLER (United States of America) said that in proposing its two formulations of paragraph 3 of draft article "x" (A/CN.9/XXIX/CRP.3), his delegation had simply wished to caution users against allowing data messages to coexist with paper bills of lading. As the formulations of the paragraph proposed by other delegations appeared to entail unintended consequences for users, he suggested that the second United States formulation should be used; however, a new sentence reading "Any paper documents issued shall contain a statement of such determination." should be inserted between the existing first and second sentences.

2. Mr. LLOYD (Australia), Mr. ILLESCAS (Spain), Mr. RENGER (Germany) and Mr. SANDOVAL LÓPEZ (Chile) supported the proposal.

3. Ms. BAZAROVA (Russian Federation) requested clarification as to whether such a statement of determination applied only to the specific paper document it appeared in, or to all subsequent documents in a given transaction.

4. Mr. CHANDLER (United States of America) said in order to avoid duplication of documents, carriers and issuers of bills of lading would understand that such a statement would apply to all subsequent documents issued in the course of the transaction.

5. Mr. MASUD (Observer for Pakistan) suggested that for greater clarity, the new additional sentence just proposed by the United States representative should be replaced by the phrase "and the said document contains a statement of such determination".

6. Mr. CHOUKRI (Observer for Morocco) said that as proposed, the rule appeared to be concerned solely with the contract of carriage, and suggested that it should be made more general in scope.

7. Mr. LLOYD (Australia) said the wording suggested by the delegation of Pakistan would make the inclusion of such a statement a prerequisite for the validity of a paper document, and proposed instead that the phrase "in these circumstances" should be inserted after "Any paper documents issued" in the new additional sentence proposed by the United States representative.

8. The CHAIRMAN said there appeared to be a consensus on accepting the second formulation of paragraph 3 proposed by the United States, with final polishing to be performed by the drafting group.

9. Article "x", as amended, was adopted.

Possible future work

10. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) suggested that the Commission should first take up his delegation's general proposal regarding the international transport of goods. There was a need for progress in the harmonization of transport law, and the Commission should address the topic in a context broad enough to include all its aspects. Before the establishment of a working group on the topic, however, adequate time should be allowed to permit countries and groups involved in the international commercial transport of goods to submit to the secretariat their views on what would constitute a core of common ground. The secretariat would then be able to provide the Commission with the information needed to evaluate the possibility of achieving greater harmonization. The Commission's close cooperation with all relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies was essential in that effort, as was the involvement of the trade, i.e., the shippers, carriers, insurers, terminal operators and others actually carrying on the international transport of goods.

11. Mr. CHANDLER (United States of America) said the lack of uniformity in the laws, customs and practices applicable to bills of lading in different countries could lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Existing liability rules on the carriage of goods, such as the Hague-Visby Rules and the United Nations Convention on the Carriage of Goods by Sea (Hamburg Rules), were inadequate because they allowed procedures concerning bills of lading to be determined by national laws. Moreover, current developments with respect to such rules were disjointed, and not all of them were positive. Thus, there was a need to harmonize the entire set of laws and practices concerning the carriage of goods. Since all of the Commission's working groups were currently occupied with other matters, his delegation was suggesting a "bottom-up" approach whereby interested parties would be invited to submit their ideas. Once that process had been completed, in one to three years, the secretariat could tie those proposals together and a working group on the subject could be established.

12. Mr. FALVEY (International Association of Ports and Harbors) said he fully supported the United States proposal. One important issue in that regard was multimodal transport, which, though technologically efficient, was hindered by the different liability regimes applicable to the different means of transport involved. It was important to harmonize and simplify those regimes to facilitate multimodal transport.

13. Mr. ABASCAL (Mexico) said the Working Group's deliberations on draft article "x" had demonstrated the urgency of dealing with issues concerning the transport of goods. He supported the proposal put forward by the United States.

14. Mr. MASUD (Observer for Pakistan) said existing instruments, such as the Hamburg Rules and the United Nations Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods, should serve as the starting-point for the Commission's harmonization efforts. For example, the Hamburg Rules, on the carriage of goods by sea, were consistent with the conventions on other means of transport, and helped to harmonize the different legal regimes for the transport of goods by various means. Instead of spending two years gathering opinions on the subject, the secretariat should begin its work immediately.

15. Mr. STURLESE (France) said that, although international rules on the transport of goods undoubtedly needed to be harmonized, modernized and simplified, a new international instrument would not necessarily achieve that goal. It might be preferable to encourage the many countries which had not yet ratified or implemented existing conventions to do so without delay. If the secretariat wished to take up the United States proposal, he would not object, but felt that it was premature to establish a working group on that topic.

16. Mr. VAN DER ZIEL (Observer for the Comité Maritime International) said he endorsed the United States proposal because there were many gaps in existing international instruments on the subject. As the United States delegation had pointed out, current conventions did not adequately deal with bills of lading themselves or the rights of the parties under bills of lading. The spread of electronic data interchange (EDI) in international trade and transport made it imperative to consider issues such as how to define the functions of bills of lading. Over the years, bills of lading had acquired new functions, all of which must be harmonized to ensure the success of EDI in the field of trade and transport.

17. Mr. RENGER (Germany) said he shared the French delegation's doubts about the utility of a new instrument to harmonize international transport law. The problem of the electronic transfer of rights was by no means limited to bills of lading or to transport law, and the discussions on article "x" had shown that it was premature to embark on further work before the facts and needs in that area were better understood. There were already many different liability regimes stemming from the application of various earlier attempts to harmonize laws and practices, so that conflicts between international conventions had become more problematic than conflicts between national laws. UNCITRAL must be careful not to add to the confusion.

18. Mr. ILLESCAS (Spain) said the lack of harmony in international law on the transport of goods stemmed from three types of situations: those where the various solutions established in international conventions conflicted with one another because no single formula was universally accepted; those where the relevant international instruments had never entered into force, as in the case of the United Nations Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods; and those where no attempt had ever been made to harmonize the relevant laws, as in the case of the rights of third parties and the use of data messages in the international transport of goods. Those three situations should not be dealt with as though they belonged to the same category. With respect to the instruments already in fore, UNCITRAL must be careful not to contradict itself by elaborating a new set of rules just after the entry into force of the Hamburg Rules. The issues in the second category might be worth exploring, and those in the third category could be addressed immediately. However, the United States proposal did not distinguish among the three situations, whose essential differences must be taken into account.

19. Ms. CRAGGS (United Kingdom) said she agreed with the French and German delegations that there was no need to begin the task of harmonization immediately. She was not aware of any major difficulties with the operation of the Hague-Visby Rules, which were the most widely applied regime in that area. Rather than begin work on a new instrument, the Commission should encourage more

countries to adopt the Hague-Visby Rules. The United Kingdom did not support the Hamburg Rules and would not ratify them unless a majority of its trading partners did so.

20. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) said he agreed that there was no immediate need to establish a working group. However, the Commission could begin the process of inviting comments and proposals. If it then determined that there was sufficient potential for progress, the secretariat could prepare a study and a draft instrument. The United States proposal was based on extensive discussions with groups involved in the carriage of goods by sea. Merely emphasizing existing conventions was tantamount to admitting that no progress could be made, since it was clear that some of those conventions were unlikely to be widely ratified and would never cover a significant proportion of the goods transported worldwide. Moreover, it was important to involve commercial sectors in determining the possible bases for future work. His delegation's proposal would enable the Commission to examine in depth, at little cost, a field in which very little harmony had been achieved thus far.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

21. Mr. ABASCAL (Mexico) said his delegation could support the United States proposal on the understanding that the secretariat was simply authorized to initiate a study or to prepare a questionnaire requesting information from States or other interested parties. It should be made quite clear, however, that the Commission was not seeking to amend the Hamburg Rules, since that would have the effect of discouraging States from joining that regime.

22. Mr. CHANDLER (United States of America) said the aim of the exercise would be to see whether any consensus emerged; it would not work to the detriment of the Hamburg Rules. If in fact the approach was premature, that would become apparent. The work would not be done by the secretariat but would comprise submissions by interested parties. The reality was that in addition to there being several regimes, those regimes were being modified by States individually, adding to the confusion.

23. Ms. SABO (Observer for Canada) said the Commission should take account of the limited resources available to the secretariat, and of the fact that there were other topics worthy of consideration, such as rules on digital signatures. The Commission should also acknowledge the impact of the United States proposal on resources, and should be careful not to discourage States from becoming parties to existing instruments. Nevertheless her delegation could accept the United States proposal if those concerns could be accommodated.

24. Mr. VAN DER ZIEL (Observer for the Comité maritime international) said what was needed was not work on liability, which was covered by existing conventions, but, rather, work on the gaps existing in all of the current instruments. There was, for example, no harmonization in the area of the rights and obligations of shippers regarding whether a shipper retained any rights where those rights were transferred to a subsequent holder. A second area of concern was that of consignees and their possible obligations. There were recent signs of further fragmentation with regard to the situation of consignees, making harmonization

imperative. The Commission must, of course, allow commercial practice to evolve, but should not trail very far behind.

25. Ms. GUREYEVA (Russian Federation) welcomed the United States proposal, but noted the importance of prioritizing the future work of the Commission. In the first instance it would be preferable to conduct a study of current practice in various countries, and perhaps, as suggested by the representative of Mexico, a questionnaire could be sent to elicit relevant information. She also agreed with the observer for Canada that there were other issues requiring the Commission's attention.

26. Mr. LLOYD (Australia) said he supported the observer for Canada. While he had no objection to the United States proposal, there were other priorities, such as performance rules and digital signatures. There were already inconsistencies in the latter area and the Commission should combat the lack of harmonization. If the secretariat had adequate resources it could follow up on the United States proposal, but as a lower priority.

27. Ms. CRAGGS (United Kingdom) agreed with the Canadian and Australian delegations that the study proposed by the United States should be postponed until more pressing matters had been considered. The Commission should also be given a clear indication from the industry that such a study was necessary. The exercise would comprise a wide spectrum of activities and a large number of issues which would probably require the establishment of a number of working groups and the investment of a great deal of time by the secretariat. Furthermore, no resources were currently available.

28. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) said that, while he shared the concerns expressed by the United Kingdom representative, the industry had made it abundantly clear that the study should not be delayed. Perhaps, as the Australian and Canadian delegations had suggested, the work should be undertaken but given low priority. At least that would initiate a flow of proposals and send a clear message to the industry that there was a forum willing to consider the topic at an appropriate time. He also believed that no work would be involved in the immediate term, as it would take the industry some time to collect its thoughts.

29. Ms. CRAGGS (United Kingdom) said she was not aware of any pressure from the industry to begin such a study. There was, however, no harm in soliciting suggestions on which areas to address. She wondered what "low priority" would mean in practice. If proposals were solicited, the secretariat must be prepared to work on them; it was not clear how much time and effort that would involve.

30. Ms. SABO (Observer for Canada) inquired whether the secretariat could provide an estimate of the time and work that would be required.

31. Mr. HERRMANN (Secretary of the Commission) said that "low priority" meant that harmonization would be considered after the conclusion of all items for which there were currently working groups, future work on Build-Operate-Transfer projects (BOT) and other items which might be considered more urgent by the Commission. The study might involve more work at the very beginning, as a questionnaire might have to be circulated. He assumed, however, that, if that

were the case, the Commission could benefit from the experience of the Comité maritime international which had sent a questionnaire on harmonization to international maritime law associations. It was hard to predict how much work would be required later on; that depended very much on the number and type of proposals submitted and on whether clarification had to be sought on the replies to the questionnaire.

32. He also wished to remind the Commission that the secretariat was operating on a very tight budget because of the financial crisis, and that its staff of five Professionals was not likely to change while there was a freeze on recruitment. The secretariat could send letters inviting proposals and give the Commission a progress report in approximately two years. The Commission might also limit its task by focusing on a few areas on which a consensus might be achieved rather than on the entire spectrum of activities.

33. Mr. LLOYD (Australia) suggested that, as a compromise, the report of the Commission could indicate that, at its next session, a decision would be taken as to whether resources were available to undertake a study on harmonization. That would reflect the importance which the Commission attached to the study without requiring it to begin any work in the current year.

34. Ms. SABO (Observer for Canada) noted that, in the project to develop a legal instrument relating to cross-border insolvency, the secretariat had collaborated with the International Association of Insolvency Practitioners, which had carried out most of the preparatory work of collecting information and identifying core areas. Perhaps the secretariat could lighten its workload by entering into a similar arrangement with an outside organization.

35. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) supported the Canadian suggestion but said that the Australian proposal to mention the study in the Commission's report might not send a strong enough signal that the Commission was willing to serve as a forum for the study. It would be regrettable to miss an opportunity.

36. Ms. CRAGGS (United Kingdom) said the Canadian suggestion was acceptable on the clear understanding that any suggestion received by the Commission would be acted on in a timely fashion.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW

Twenty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 602nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 10 June 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. PIAGGI de VANOSSI (Argentina)

CONTENTS

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: DRAFT MODEL LAW; POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK (continued)

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: DRAFT MODEL LAW; POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK (continued) (A/50/17; A/CN.9/421 and 426)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Commission agreed to entrust the publication of the Guide to Enactment of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Legal Aspects of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Related Means of Communication to the secretariat, which would be authorized to make changes as suggested by the Commission. In that way, it would be possible to publish the Guide together with the Model Law.

2. It was so decided.

Possible future work (continued)

3. The CHAIRMAN said there was a consensus that the Commission should continue to accept and consider proposals for future work, but that such proposals would not be considered to be a high priority.

4. Mr. SANDOVAL LÓPEZ (Chile) said that the Commission should not consider any new topics in the area of maritime transport for which numerous conventions already existed. His country had joined the international effort at harmonization by adopting uniform legislation such as the Hamburg Rules. If it was decided, some delegations had proposed, that the Commission would consider outside bodies' concerns relating to new aspects of maritime law, his delegation strongly believed that the topic of liability in maritime transport should be excluded, since it was already covered by the Hamburg Rules and The Hague regime. By establishing another regime in the area of liability, the Commission would be undermining current efforts at harmonization.

5. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) introduced his delegation's proposal regarding future work on electronic commerce. From a review of the work done by the Working Group on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and discussions with commercial sector groups and government agencies in a number of countries, two major topics of concern had emerged: digital signatures and electronic commerce contract and performance. His delegation recommended that the secretariat should be authorized to produce a preliminary study on each topic, to be considered by the Working Group in 1997. The Working Group would then make recommendations which would be considered by the Commission at its thirtieth session in order to determine the course of future work.

6. International rules on digital signatures could be the key to further progress in electronic commerce. In recent months, many countries had begun to develop laws regarding digital signatures to provide standards by which a remote party could sign a document through computer means and have some reasonable commercial assurance of the signature's acceptability. The Commission had the unique opportunity to set international legal norms to guide the growth of electronic commerce. It would be far more difficult to unravel embedded differences between national laws in the future.

7. Moreover, in the case of electronic and computer-based communications and transactions, many legal issues were no longer covered under contract or copyright law. For example, where data messages and the sale of products which consisted of electronic data were concerned, it was no longer clear what was meant by the terms "performance" or "delivery" when those products were taken off the Internet. There again, the Commission could take the lead in providing the legal infrastructure for trade and commerce.

8. Lastly, his delegation wished to propose a third topic for future work which was based on a recommendation of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) of the Economic Commission for Europe, which had identified impediments to electronic commerce arising from "writings" and other such requirements. WP.4 had invited the Commission to assess the feasibility of undertaking corrective work in that area. The Commission could consider whether it could take any appropriate action after the preparation of a secretariat study.

9. Ms. BOSS (United States of America) said that the two main topics for future work proposed by her delegation had two essential characteristics which it believed should guide the Commission's future work in the field of EDI. Both topics dealt with areas where uniformity in law was crucial to the development of commerce and both were directly related to the Model Law. A number of jurisdictions, nationally and internationally, were beginning to consider the adoption of legislation that would determine the circumstances under which digital signatures would be recognized in commercial practice and had, in some instances, initiated systems for certifying the authenticity of those signatures. It was vital that the applicable rules should be uniform lest they become a barrier to international and national trade.

10. In the draft Model Law, the Commission had considered the extent to which data messages would comply with writing and signature requirements. Thus, the area of digital signatures was integrally related to the Model Law. While the Model Law had basic rules regarding the authenticity of messages and contract formation, those rules did not fully address the type of transactions that were currently being undertaken in an electronic environment. There existed a body of laws that governed the sale of goods, but there was no body of law anywhere, that dealt with such transactions as the licensing or purchase of software or with contracts granting access to information or data in an electronic environment.

11. The Commission still had to determine what the final work product in that area would be, what specific topics would be treated under either of the proposals and how the various issues would be handled. That was why her delegation had requested the secretariat to conduct a preliminary study of each topic which could then be discussed by the Working Group before being submitted to the Commission.

12. Mr. STURLESE (France) said that before making a decision on future work, the Commission should decide if it wanted to continue working on EDI or on build-operate-transfer (BOT) projects, since it did not have the resources to work on both topics simultaneously. If the Commission decided to continue working on EDI, his delegation did not consider digital signatures to be a topic

of fundamental concern at present. The Commission should continue the work it had begun on the possible preparation of a code of conduct for third-party service providers which provided the interface between users in an electronic environment.

13. Mr. HERRMANN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the Working Group on Electronic Data Interchange was reserved for EDI matters, subject to the Commission's decision and possible changes. As far as BOT was concerned, a substantive discussion could be held thereon at the next session of the Commission.

14. Mr. SORIEUL (International Trade Law Branch) said that the Commission should give very clear instructions to the secretariat concerning the scope of the studies it wished to have carried out because they involved fields in which there was very little literature available. The secretariat would have to rely heavily on the assistance of delegations. The Working Group should not have to waste time on lengthy debates on the exact scope of its mandate.

15. Mr. BURMAN (United States of America) said that his delegation had done its best to confine its proposals to practical topics and to modify them where necessary. It assumed that any important topic that was selected for consideration would of necessity involve third-party service providers, which were constantly growing in number and variety. His delegation had come to a similar conclusion on the subject of electronic registries, which was likely to become an increasingly common topic of discussion. Indeed, it now appeared more practical to take up both electronic registries and third-party service providers in the context of individual topics such as digital signatures and electronic contract and performance rules rather than as generic topics in themselves.

16. Mr. Won-Kyong KIM (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that the Commission should continue its consideration of electronic commerce so that the Model Law could become a useful tool for the international community. With regard to the specific topics to be given priority, he found the United States proposal acceptable.

17. Mr. RENGER (Germany) said that because of the growing importance of electronic interaction in all fields, including international trade, the problem of digital signatures went far beyond commerce. It was related to a host of laws, including international civil law and administrative law as well. Indeed, he was not sure whether UNCITRAL was the appropriate body to discuss and find an internationally acceptable solution to the problem of digital signatures. His delegation did not believe that a role could be found for digital signatures which applied to international trade law treaties. One of the problems of the electronics field was the rapidity of its development. Delegations to UNCITRAL, which represented national Governments, should think about the overall welfare of their countries and not focus solely on the interests of the electronics industry, which was profit-driven.

18. Ms. SABO (Observer for Canada) said that while she agreed with the representative of France on the need to consider all priorities, she disagreed with him as far as EDI priorities were concerned. She supported the United

States proposal to undertake work in the areas of digital signatures and contract performance rules in electronic commerce. However, she was concerned that the Commission would be asking the secretariat to undertake too much.

19. Mr. ABASCAL (Mexico) said that he would prefer the Commission to continue working on EDI and to take advantage of the momentum already generated by the Working Group to develop the Model Law further. He suggested that the Working Group should be mandated to begin formulating a new set of rules or principles after examining and approving some of the topics submitted to it by the secretariat.

20. Ms. CRAGGS (United Kingdom) said that in her view, digital signature standards and the knowing with certainty the identity of the party one was dealing with were the absolute bedrock of electronic commerce. Very closely linked to that was the issue of performance rules. For that reason, her delegation supported the United States proposal that the Working Group should give top priority to work first on digital signatures followed closely by contract and performance rules.

21. Mr. ILLESCAS (Spain) said it was significant that once the Commission completed its current work on EDI it planned to change the title of the Model Law so that it referred to electronic commerce. The thorough understanding of that field acquired by the Commission and the Working Group on EDI over the previous five years should be exploited to the fullest. To the extent that resources allowed, a working group that dealt with those topics should continue to exist.

22. A good starting point for the work of the Working Group was digital signature; the expression of the will to negotiate with proper security and proper assurances that the data message corresponded to a will to negotiate. Equally important were third-party interventions in the passage of the electronic message, the rules relating to performance in the context of electronically concluded contracts and the question of inclusion by reference. Indeed, the latter aspect was a serious problem in trade transacted on paper; when such business became electronic the problem became even more acute. The issue of electronic registries also needed to be tackled.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

23. Mr. SORIEUL (International Trade Law Branch) said that the secretariat had some concerns about the proposed study on rules on digital signatures. Article 6 of the Model Law had deliberately been drafted in very general terms in order to accommodate the possibility of technological change. Very few legislations in the world had detailed rules on digital signatures. The Commission would therefore need to decide which field it wanted the secretariat to study and would need to provide the essential documentation, since few legal publications were available in the field.

24. Mr. CHANDLER (United States of America) said that four states in the United States of America had passed laws on digital signatures, and approximately 14 others were considering the adoption of such laws. Relevant materials could be furnished to the secretariat. Issues were emerging which had legal

implications and, with the proliferation of digital signature devices, the need for regulation would become apparent.

25. Mr. ABASCAL (Mexico) said that the name of the Working Group on Electronic Data Interchange should be changed in line with the new title of the Model Law.

26. Mr. FARIDI ARAGHI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that there might not be enough material to warrant a study on the rules on digital signatures. His delegation would prefer to concentrate on incorporation by reference and third-party information and service providers.

27. Mr. STURLESE (France) said that everyone agreed it was important for the work on electronic commerce to continue. However, he had reservations about having the Working Group study the rules on digital signatures because the mandate was not very specific; moreover working groups were expensive, both for the United Nations and for Governments. Unless the Working Group had a clear and precise objective, it would waste time deciding what it should be discussing. In fact, the Working Group itself, in paragraphs 110 and 111 of its report (A/CN.9/421), had expressed doubts as to whether it would be realistic to focus exclusively on digital signatures.

28. Ms. BOSS (United States of America) said that it was difficult to specify a precise mandate for the Working Group and at the same time give it enough discretion to determine what needed to be done. Clearly, it would be inappropriate for the Working Group to formulate any technical requirements or to dictate the use of any specific technologies; the scope of the topic must be broad enough to encompass emerging technologies. Some specific legal issues that might be considered by the Working Group were the legal basis supporting the certification processes of certifying authorities; rules and guidelines associated with digital signatures; allocations of risk; responsibilities of users in cases of fraud or error; and the role and liability of third-party service providers.

29. The CHAIRMAN said she took it that the Commission accepted the proposal that the secretariat should prepare a study on the rules on digital signatures and a study on electronic commerce contract and performance rules.

30. It was so decided.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.40 p.m.